



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Partners

A newsletter for Wisconsin's  
conservation partners

Fall/Winter 2004

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## SPOTLIGHT PARTNERSHIP

### Where there were none Now there are many

In 1999, The Schauer Family contacted the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program for help managing 55 acres of their 300 acre farm for wildlife. The rural Marquette County farm contains a trout stream, oaks woods and savanna, tamarack swamp, and many old fields. Also, a population of the federally endangered Karner Blue butterfly occurs within 2 miles of the farm. Because of the proximity of this endangered species, our efforts focused on improving Karner habitat. The old fallow fields were burned with prescribed fire and herbicided. Then they were planted to a diverse mix of native wildflowers and grasses including wild lupine, the sole food source of the Karner blue larvae. The first season we mowed the fields to reduce weeds. By the summer of 2003, the prairie plantings had grown robust and diverse providing habitat for many grassland birds, but no Karner blue butterflies had made them a home. The habitat crew decided to do a prescribed burn to stimulate wildflower growth and reduce thatch. The prairie plantings and savanna were burned successfully, thanks to our partners in a revitalized fire program. Participants in the burn included staff from three USFWS offices, The Nature Conservancy, and trained volunteers. The new growth of the prairie caught the attention of the Karners, and August butterfly surveys found them occupying habitat in all four restoration units. The Schauers were so ecstatic to learn of our success, the very next day they drove out to the farm to see the butterflies themselves. The butterflies

greeted them with open wings. One even landed on Herb's finger!

Mike Engel



©Thomas Meyer

## Phenology Calendar 2005

Staff members from the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.W. Extension, are putting the finishing touches on the 2005 phenology calendar. Phenology is a branch of science focused on the relationships between climate and recurring natural events such as flowers blooming and birds migrating. Since 1936, the Aldo Leopold family has inventoried phenological events that occur on and near their property, including bird migration and blooming dates of native prairie plants. In order to use this information for the calendar, 24 years of data (1974-2000) collected by Nina Leopold Bradley was averaged to determine the phenological date on which an event occurs. In addition to the phenology data, the 2005 calendar features monthly descriptions of state and federally listed threatened and endangered species. If you did not receive a 2004 phenology calendar and would be interested in receiving the 2005 version, contact rhonda\_krueger@fws.gov or (608) 742-7100 ext. 14.

Rhonda Krueger

### **Sand County Foundation Awarded Grant to Restore Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat**

One of the Wisconsin Private Lands Office's (WIPLO) long time partners, the Sand County Foundation, recently was awarded a \$150,000 Private Stewardship Grant by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help restore habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly in the state. WIPLO and Sand County Foundation have worked for the last 5 years on a project that helps private landowners in the Central Sands area of the state restore land to benefit the Karner. Sand County, with the assistance of Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife biologists, will work with an additional 30 landowners to restore 1,400 acres of Karner habitat under the grant. Since the Karner restoration program began, over 3,000 acres of habitat on private lands has been restored. The restoration sites are selected following a landowner's request for assistance to FWS or Sand County. FWS biologists working with the landowner evaluate the site for restoration opportunities, potential for the site to be colonized by Karners, and other considerations. The sites are located in areas of the state that have been identified in the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan. Restoration techniques will include mechanical, chemical, and fire control of brush and woody vegetation, seeding of grassland species including lupine, and removal of tree lines and other barriers that restrict movement of Karners. For more information about the Karner program or Private Stewardship grants contact Mike Engel, USFWS, at 608/221-1206 ext. 21.

**Jim Ruwaldt**

Wisconsin  
Karner Blue Butterfly Range



### **Wisconsin Private Lands Technical Session - 2004**

The 2004 Wisconsin Private Lands Technical Session was hosted by the Ashland Fishery Resources Office in Ashland, Wisconsin. This is a meeting of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Private Lands staff from around the state and is hosted by a different office each year. During the session, practices and ideas are shared and restoration projects are toured. The knowledge gained from these sessions benefits all Wisconsin Private Lands staff and the projects in which they are involved. The meeting started at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center on Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, and wrapped up on Friday. This year's session focused on stream and riparian restoration. A few of the projects highlighted on the tour included the Wickstrom Whittlesey Creek Instream Habitat Improvements, Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge Riparian Forest Restoration, Submerged Vane Projects on Fish Creek, and the Billy Creek Fish Passage Culvert Replacement. Participants learned about the many instream, riparian and north woods issues, practices and projects happening in the Lake Superior basin of Wisconsin. One special highlight of this year's session was a tour of the U.S. Geological Survey research vessel, the Kiyi. Captain Joe Walters lead the group on a tour of the impressive ship, providing great insight into its fishing, research and performance capabilities.

**Ted Koehler**



Wisconsin Private Lands Staff

## Fire as a Management Tool!



Prescribe fire at Bob Schmiedlin's property in Columbia County

In March 2004, the WIPLO began preparing burn plans for the upcoming spring prescribed fire season. Our ability to burn on private lands had been curtailed since 2002 because of federal policy changes regarding prescribed burning. The largest hurdle to clear was conforming to and adopting the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) prescribe fire standards. Are you asking yourself what is NWCG? The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) is made up of the USDA Forest Service; four Department of the Interior agencies: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); and State forestry agencies through the National Association of State Foresters. The purpose of NWCG is to coordinate programs of the participating wildfire management agencies to avoid wasteful duplication and to provide a means of constructively working together. Its goal is to provide more effective execution of each agency's fire management program. The group provides a formalized system to agree upon standards of training, equipment, qualifications, and other operational functions. The process WIPLO developed is to prioritize burns, develop burn plans for review by the FWS Fire Management Officer, enlist the assistance of a NWCG qualified burn boss, pull together a team of experienced prescribed burners, prep our equipment, secure burn permits, and follow all of the necessary protocols the day of the burn. Through this process, we conducted eight different burns this

past spring on six different landowner properties. Our immediate prescribe fire goal is to improve our capabilities to burn on private lands. With limited staff and volunteers, we can only burn a portion of the properties we would like to burn each season. As we progress down the NWCG road, the Wisconsin Partners program will continue to utilize prescribed burning as one of our management tools to restore habitat on private lands.

**Kurt Waterstradt**

## Wisconsin Private Lands Contact Stations



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. St. Croix Wetland Management Office<br>715-246-7784                  | 6. Necedah National Wildlife Refuge<br>608-565-2551    |
| 2. Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge<br>608-539-2311                 | 7. Ecological Services Office<br>920-866-1717          |
| 3. Upper Mississippi River Refuge<br>La Crosse District<br>608-783-8405 | 8. Leopold Wetland Management District<br>608-742-7100 |
| 4. Upper Mississippi River Refuge<br>McGregor District<br>319-873-3423  | 9. Wisconsin Private Lands Office<br>608-221-1206      |
| 5. Fisheries Assistance Office<br>715-682-6185                          |  |

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**Welcome Rachel Mockler!**

Rachel Mockler was hired on June 1, 2004 by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife



Program as a wildlife biologist at the Leopold Wetland Management District in Portage, Wisconsin. She will be working with wildlife biologist Rhonda Krueger. The focus of the Leopold District's Partners program is the restoration of wetlands and prairies within a ten county area of

south central Wisconsin. Rachel is originally from New Jersey where she worked as a veterinary technician for ten years. Deciding to pursue a career in wildlife, she attended the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point earning a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife in 2002. While there, she was accepted into the Student Career Employment Program with the Fish and Wildlife Service. This provided an opportunity to further her education, which she did by attending South Dakota State University, studying the use of wetlands by lesser scaup in eastern South Dakota. She received a Master's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from South Dakota State University in 2004.

**Kurt Waterstradt:  
Badger to Buckeye!**

I would like to take this small block of space to say thank you to all the wonderful landowners, conservation partners, and colleagues I've had the privilege to work with over the past seven years restoring Wisconsin's grasslands and oak savannas. As many of you are aware, I've recently accepted the position as the Ohio Private Lands



Coordinator and will be leaving in November to begin the next phase of my Fish and Wildlife career. It humbles me to see the dedication to the resource and the excitement everyone has for this unique ecosystem. As I depart Wisconsin once again, I have to reflect on what we've accomplished, the new friends I've made, and the experience and education this time has been. I am sure I will look back on this time in my life and never question that it was one of the best times of my Fish and Wildlife career.

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